

be adequately served by acceptance of the sum to be agreed upon. Mere accidental or technical violations may be dealt with less severely than willful and substantial violations.

§ 103.6 Joint and several liability.

When two or more debtors are jointly and severally liable, collection action will not be withheld against one such debtor until the other or others pay their proportionate shares. The agency should not attempt to allocate the burden of paying such claims as between the debtors but should proceed to liquidate the indebtedness as quickly as possible. Care should be taken that a compromise agreement with one such debtor does not release the agency's claim against the remaining debtors. The amount of a compromise with one such debtor shall not be considered a precedent or as morally binding in determining the amount which will be required from other debtors jointly and severally liable on the claim.

§ 103.7 Compromise for a combination of reasons.

A claim may be compromised for one or for more than one of the reasons authorized in this part.

§ 103.8 Further review of compromise offers.

If an agency holds a debtor's firm written offer of compromise which is substantial in amount and the agency is uncertain as to whether the offer should be accepted, it may refer the offer, the supporting data, and particulars concerning the claim to the General Accounting Office or to the Department of Justice. The General Accounting Office or the Department of Justice may act upon such an offer or return it to the agency with instructions or advice.

§ 103.9 Restrictions.

Neither a percentage of a debtor's profits nor stock in a debtor corporation will be accepted in compromise of a claim. In negotiating a compromise with a business concern, consideration should be given to requiring a waiver of the tax-loss-carry-forward and tax-loss-carry-back rights of the debtor.

PART 104—STANDARDS FOR SUSPENDING OR TERMINATING COLLECTION ACTION

Sec.

- 104.1 Scope and application.
- 104.2 Suspension of collection activity.
- 104.3 Termination of collection activity.
- 104.4 Transfer of claims.

AUTHORITY: 31 U.S.C. 3711(a)(3).

SOURCE: 49 FR 8903, Mar. 9, 1984, unless otherwise noted.

§ 104.1 Scope and application.

(a) The standards set forth in this part apply to the suspension or termination of collection action pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 3711(a)(3) on claims which do not exceed \$20,000, exclusive of interest, penalties, and administrative costs, after deducting the amount of partial payments or collections, if any. The head of an agency (or designee) may suspend or terminate collection action under this part with respect to claims for money or property arising out of activities of that agency prior to the referral of such claims to the General Accounting Office or to the Department of Justice for litigation. The Comptroller General (or designee) may exercise such authority with respect to claims referred to the General Accounting Office prior to their further referral for litigation.

(b) If, after deducting the amount of partial payments or collections, if any, a claim exceeds \$20,000, exclusive of interest, penalties, and administrative costs, the authority to suspend or terminate rests solely with the Department of Justice. If the agency thinks suspension or termination may be appropriate, it should evaluate the matter, using the factors set forth in this part. If the agency then concludes that suspension or termination is appropriate, it must refer the matter to the Department of Justice, using the Claims Collection Litigation Report. See 4 CFR 105.2(b). The referral should specify the reasons for the agency's recommendation. If the agency decides not to suspend or terminate collection action on the claim, Justice Department approval is not required. If an agency determines that its claim is plainly erroneous or clearly without

legal merit, it may terminate collection action regardless of the amount involved, without the need for Department of Justice concurrence.

§ 104.2 Suspension of collection activity.

(a) *Inability to locate debtor.* Collection action may be suspended temporarily on a claim when the debtor cannot be located after diligent effort and there is reason to believe that future collection action may be sufficiently productive to justify periodic review and action on the claim, with due consideration for the size and amount which may be realized thereon. The following sources may be of assistance in locating missing debtors: Telephone directories; city directories; postmasters; drivers' license records; automobile title and registration records; state and local governmental agencies; the Internal Revenue Service (§ 102.18 of this chapter); other Federal agencies; employers, relatives, friends; credit agency skip locate reports, and credit bureaus. Suspension as to a particular debtor should not defer the early liquidation of security for the debt. Every reasonable effort should be made to locate missing debtors sufficiently in advance of the bar of the applicable statute of limitations, such as 28 U.S.C. 2415, to permit the timely filing of suit if such action is warranted. If the missing debtor has signed a confess-judgment note and is in default, referral of the note for the entry of judgment should not be delayed because of the debtor's missing status.

(b) *Financial condition of debtor.* Collection action may also be suspended temporarily on a claim when the debtor owns no substantial equity in realty or personal property and is unable to make payments on the Government's claim or effect a compromise at the time but the debtor's future prospects justify retention of the claim for periodic review and action, and:

(1) The applicable statute of limitations has been tolled or started running anew; or

(2) Future collection can be effected by offset, notwithstanding the statute of limitations, with due regard to the 10-year limitation prescribed by 31 U.S.C. 3716(c)(1); or

(3) The debtor agrees to pay interest on the amount of the debt on which collection action will be temporarily suspended, and such temporary suspension is likely to enhance the debtor's ability to fully pay the principal amount of the debt with interest at a later date.

(c) *Request for waiver or administrative review.* (1) If the statute under which waiver or administrative review is sought is "mandatory," that is, if it prohibits the agency from collecting the debt prior to the agency's consideration of the request for waiver or review (see *Califano v. Yamasaki*, 422 U.S. 682 (1979)), then collection action must be suspended until either: (i) The agency has considered the request for waiver/review, or (ii) the applicable time limit for making the waiver/review request, as prescribed in the agency's regulations, has expired and the debtor, upon proper notice, has not made such a request.

(2) If the applicable waiver/review statute is "permissive," that is, if it does not require all requests for waiver/review to be considered, and if it does not prohibit collection action pending consideration of a waiver/review request (for example, 5 U.S.C. 5584), collection action may be suspended pending agency action on a waiver/review request based upon appropriate consideration, on a case-by-case basis, as to whether:

(i) There is a reasonable possibility that waiver will be granted, or that the debt (in whole or in part) will be found not owing from the debtor;

(ii) The Government's interests would be protected, if suspension were granted, by reasonable assurance that the debt could be recovered if the debtor does not prevail; and

(iii) Collection of the debt will cause undue hardship.

(3) If the applicable statutes and regulations would not authorize refund by the agency to the debtor of amounts collected prior to agency consideration of the debtor's waiver/review request in the event the agency acts favorably on it, collection action should ordinarily be suspended, without regard to the factors specified in paragraph (c)(2) of this section, unless it appears clear,

§ 104.3

based on the request and the surrounding circumstances, that the request is frivolous and was made primarily to delay collection.

§ 104.3 Termination of collection activity.

The head of an agency (or designee) may terminate collection activity and consider the agency's file on the claim closed under the following standards:

(a) *Inability to collect any substantial amount.* Collection action may be terminated on a claim when it becomes clear that the Government cannot collect or enforce collection of any significant sum from the debtor, having due regard for the judicial remedies available to the Government, the debtor's future financial prospects, and the exemptions available to the debtor under State and Federal law. In determining the debtor's inability to pay, the following factors, among others, may be considered: Age and health of the debtor; present and potential income; inheritance prospects; the possibility that assets have been concealed or improperly transferred by the debtor; the availability of assets or income which may be realized by enforced collection proceedings.

(b) *Inability to locate debtor.* Collection action may be terminated on a claim when the debtor cannot be located, and either: (1) There is no security remaining to be liquidated, or (2) the applicable statute of limitations has run and the prospects of collecting by offset, notwithstanding the bar of the statute of limitations, are too remote to justify retention of the claim.

(c) *Cost will exceed recovery.* Collection action may be terminated on a claim when it is likely that the cost of further collection action will exceed the amount recoverable thereby.

(d) *Claim legally without merit.* Collection action should be terminated immediately on a claim whenever it is determined that the claim is legally without merit.

(e) *Claim cannot be substantiated by evidence.* Collection action should be terminated when it is determined that the evidence necessary to prove the claim cannot be produced or the necessary witnesses are unavailable and

4 CFR Ch. II (1–1–97 Edition)

efforts to induce voluntary payment are unavailing.

§ 104.4 Transfer of claims.

When an agency has doubt as to whether collection action should be suspended or terminated on a claim, it may refer the claim to the General Accounting Office for advice. When a significant enforcement policy is involved in reducing a statutory penalty or forfeiture to judgment, or recovery of a judgment is a prerequisite to the imposition of administrative sanctions, such as the suspension or revocation of a license or the privilege of participating in a Government sponsored program, an agency may refer such a claim for litigation even though termination of collection activity might otherwise be given consideration under § 104.3 (a) or (c). Claims on which an agency holds a judgment by assignment or otherwise will be referred to the Department of Justice for further action if renewal of the judgment lien or enforced collection proceedings are justified under the criteria discussed in this part, unless the agency concerned has statutory authority for handling its own litigation.

PART 105—REFERRALS TO DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE OR GAO

Sec.

105.1 Prompt referral.

105.2 Claims collection litigation report.

105.3 Preservation of evidence.

105.4 Minimum amount of referrals to Department of Justice.

105.5 Preliminary referrals to GAO.

AUTHORITY: 31 U.S.C. 3711.

SOURCE: 49 FR 8904, Mar. 9, 1984, unless otherwise noted.

§ 105.1 Prompt referral.

(a) Except as provided in paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section, claims on which aggressive collection action has been taken in accordance with part 102 of this chapter and which cannot be compromised, or on which collection action cannot be suspended or terminated, in accordance with parts 103 and 104 of this chapter, shall be promptly referred to the Department of Justice for litigation. Claims for which the gross original amount is over \$100,000